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CORRESPONDENCE.

A Biographical and Autobiographical Letter.

EDITORS OF 'THE AUK':—

Dear Sirs:—The following letter, by Colonel Bernard J. D. Irwin, Surgeon, U. S. Army (retired), throws so much light upon the least-known period of the lives of two of America's distinguished naturalists that I take pleasure in presenting it to the readers of 'The Auk.'

EDGAR A. MEARNs.

COBBOURGH, CANADA.

Sept. 21, 1901.

Dear Major Mearns:—

In response to your request it affords me pleasure to answer your queries in regard to the late Major Charles E. Bendire, U. S. A. Yes, your assumption is correct, it was I who initiated in him the taste for natural

history which he cultivated with so much zeal and advantage as a naturalist.

Fort Buchanan, Arizona, was situated at the Hot or Monkey Springs, the head waters of the Senorita Creek, a branch of the Santa Cruz, about eight miles from the international boundary and ten miles from the Mexican town of Santa Cruz. I was stationed there from December, 1857, until July, 1861. When our troops withdrew from the Territory in the latter year, that post was abandoned, but when the volunteer troops from California resumed possession of that region the station was re-established at and thereafter known as 'Camp Crittenden.'

In those days we had no hospital corps, hospital attendants—stewards, nurses, cooks and orderlies—were detailed from the line at the request of the medical officers. While on duty there I had the late Hospital Steward Louis Othon Faringhy detailed as acting steward, taught him the routine duties of the position, and he served with me off and on during many years at West Point, Fort Riley, &c. I found him the best and most reliable non-commissioned soldier and man that I ever met. As he belonged to 'D' troop, 1st Dragoons—Bendire's company—I believe it was at his suggestion or through the First Sergeant of the troop—R. F. Bernard, now Brevet Brigadier-General U. S. Army, retired—that I had Private Charles Bendire detailed as hospital attendant, sometime in 1858. He was then comparatively young, an active efficient soldier, quiet and of modest, retiring disposition. At that time I was collecting specimens of Natural History and seeing my work he would from time to time bring me specimens of one kind or another which he supposed desirable for my collection.

His troop having been ordered to California my impression is that he accompanied it to that State and was stationed at Fort Tejon, in the San Bernardino Valley, where he commenced collecting birds' nests and birds' eggs.

In 1864 he called to see me at Memphis, Tennessee, having been commissioned a lieutenant in the regular army after having served as non-commissioned officer—including hospital steward—some years after his service under me. The collection of reptiles mentioned in your letter, was made by me for the Smithsonian Institute at Fort Buchanan and vicinity in 1858-60. I was in frequent correspondence with Professor Spencer F. Baird and through him and Professor Joseph Henry I presented the 'Irwin Meteorite' to the institution. Bendire was not with me in the affair at Apache Pass in 1861. As this is written from memory I regret that I cannot give details in satisfactory form, but trust the résumé may aid you in the proposed paper.

With kind regards believe me,

Yours very truly,

B. J. D. IRWIN.